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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/600,391	06/20/2003	Andreas Nickel	Bayer 10260-WCG	8238
27386	7590	12/19/2005	EXAMINER	
NORRIS, MCLAUGHLIN & MARCUS, P.A. 875 THIRD AVE 18TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10022			NAGPAUL, JYOTI	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1743	

DATE MAILED: 12/19/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

✓

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/600,391	Applicant(s) NICKEL ET AL.	
	Examiner Jyoti Nagpaul	Art Unit 1743	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 17-25 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 and 26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-16 and 26, drawn to a separation module, classified in class 422, subclass 130.
 - II. Claims 17-25, drawn to method for producing a separation module, classified in class 436, subclass 180.
2. Inventions I and II are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the joining of the ceramic capillaries with a specific distance can be produced by any method such as manually.
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
4. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and the search required for Group I is not required for Group II, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
5. During a telephone conversation with William Gerstenzang on December 9, 2005 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-16 and 26. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to

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this Office action. Claims 17-25 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. **Claims 1-2,7,11-16 and 26** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bellhouse (US 6217764).

Bellhouse teaches a membrane filter. The filter comprises at least one bundle of ceramic capillaries wherein a distance is established between capillaries by joining. Bellhouse teaches, “the porous blocks with helically grooved ducts within them could be made by a technique adapted from the well-known process for making ceramic filters with cylindrical capillaries according to the prior art.” (See Col.3, Lines 46-50) (See Col. 2, Lines 47-65) Bellhouse further teaches the capillaries (11) are combined at their endings by perforated plates/baffle plates (28) and further comprises a housing (24) which encloses the bundle, the housing having an inlet and/or outlet pipe (16) in fluid communication with the inside of the capillaries for a first material flow and/or outlet pipe (15) in fluid communication with the innerspace between the capillaries (11) for a second material flow the distance between the capillaries is kept constant by spacers/unlabeled. (See Figure 7) Bellhouse further teaches have, on the inside, a thin

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membrane having separation cavity. Bellhouse teaches, "Both of these examples work well with a polymeric, permeable, membrane tube of diameter 12.5 mm, but it is difficult to scale up these apparatuses to provide membrane." (See Col. 1, Lines 21-23)

According to Figures 2-7, the capillaries (11) are arranged parallel to each other in a housing and the separation module comprises a feed space (12) and a permeation space (14). The housing (24) consists of stainless steel. (See Col. 3, Lines 51-52)

Bellhouse further teaches a feed space and permeation space and wherein a vacuum/pump is applied to the permeate space (14). (See Figure 2)

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

10. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein

were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

11. **Claims 3-6 and 8-9** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bellhouse (US 6217764).

Refer above for the teachings of Bellhouse.

Bellhouse fails to teach the external and internal diameter ranges and the distance between the capillaries.

It would have been obvious to one of the ordinary skill in the art to modify the system of Bellhouse such that the external and internal diameter ranges and the distance between the capillaries are as recites in claims 3-6 and 8-9 in order to an achieve an optimally efficient filter. It has been held in the court where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. (In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233)

Conclusion


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jyoti Nagpaul whose telephone number is 571-272-1273. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday (8:00-4:30).

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on 571-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JN


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700